

and one day it occurred to the parents to try and find out, whether their children were imbued with sense and knowledge sufficient to face life's struggles. So the father caused a large ditch to be constructed from the river, by which he lived, through a hill to a small stream on the further side, so making it that the water would flow rapidly through the ditch. The children were then ordered to descend into the ditch and all but one entering the water, were swept away and drowned. He who was left, evidently of a more cautious mind, slowly let himself into the water, and by holding on to the roots of trees, passed safely from end of end of the ditch. Again the scene changes, his parents dead: the youth found himself alone in the world. Weary of travelling about the jungle, and with what appeared to him no purpose in life, no home, no wife, he one day fell asleep; and there came to him a vision, in which he was advised to ascend Mt. Batu Api.* On its summit he would find an egg which he was to crack, and a woman would be found inside, who was to be his wife. Following the instruction he gained his wife, and from these two the Murut race sprang.

W. R. T. CLEMENT.

Batu Lawi.

Should you happen to visit the Government station at Limbang and ride in the early morning round what is known as the "Five Mile," when the banks of mist have rolled away from the distant hills, you would perhaps see far away in the distance the peak of Batu Lawi. It is described as being of limestone destitute of all vegetation, its sides precipitous and unscaleable. The cause of this phenomenon, so remarkable in a land where all else is clothed in verdant forest, is told in a legendary manner by the Muruts of that region. These events happened generations ago, when the

* *Batu Api* is a legendary mountain for account of which see next story.

Marriages among the poorer classes of Chinese in Sarawak.

At the outset it must be said that the Chinese marriage ceremonies, of the Hakka and Kay nations in Sarawak will be very much the same as those in China ; but the Chinese here in Sarawak, being very much mixed up with other nationalities, it is quite probable that they have taken over some of the rites of other nations indigenous to Sarawak. It is for this reason that the writer publishes the following article, which will be divided under three headings, namely : Courtship—The Engagement—The Marriage feast.

COURTSHIP.

As in every business transaction, so also for finding a future wife, the Chinese must have a go-between or middle-man (*moi nün*). Suppose a young man, being independent of his parents and having independent means to live upon, wants to settle down in the marriage state, the first thing he does is to look for a good, trustworthy go-between—as a rule they do not take a relation, but a friend or any person who is a good spokesman. To this man he explains his idea of his future wife, and he generally tells him that she should be active, good-tempered, able and willing to look after the management of the house in general. It seldom happens that he speaks about beauty or love. After he has explained the desire of his heart he asks his middle-man to look for such a wife and to let him know the result, at the same time promising him a present (generally in hard cash) if he fulfills his duty properly.

This middle-man now goes round looking and inquiring where such a wife could be got ; and when he thinks he has found one, he speaks with her parents but does not reveal by whom he has been sent or for whom the daughter might be destined. Everything is kept quiet until the young man has approved of the choice of his go-between. It sometimes happens that the parents try to get a husband for their daughter and that the same go-between is asked to do the work ; in